

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION



PHOTOS BY DAN BUSHNELL AND JACK ZANTO

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION

Provides managerial, administrative support, information, computer, legal, and personnel services to all divisions of the department.

The Centralized Services Division (CSD) provides managerial and legal services to the department through the Director's Office. The division also manages all financial activities, contracting, and procurement; oversees personnel policies and functions; coordinates computer systems; performs public information and media relations tasks; produces publications and graphics materials; and provides general administrative support services. Support services include payroll, data entry, reception, and mail. Fiscal responsibilities include trust revenue collection and distribution, as well as bond and loan accounting.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, CSD processed fire suppression payments amounting to \$40 million and hired hundreds of emergency firefighters during an unprecedented fire season.

Procurement and Contracting Bureau

The Procurement and Contracting Bureau established a variety of annual agreements for the procurement of goods and services that allow employees to contract directly with vendors and contractors. These agreements helped reduce the number of requisitions submitted by field personnel and provided them with cost-efficient and expedient methods of procuring urgently needed commodities and services.

Bureau staff have established numerous, as-needed contracts for fire-related commodities such as sack lunches, batteries, portable toilets, ice, etc. It is anticipated that these contracts will decrease the time needed to procure, the cost of procuring, and the amount of documentation needed.

Staff continue to work with the federal government to establish mutual contracts for fire-fighting equipment based on competitive quotations.

Competitive solicitations exceeding \$25,000 are now listed on the Internet, increasing competition and decreasing duplicating and mailing costs. Over 450 contracts, grants, and amendments (with a total value of over \$39 million) were reviewed for legal and fiscal compliance, and contractual requirements (such as liability insurance, workers compensation coverage, and prevailing wages) were monitored.

Bureau staff are working with other employees to develop a new loan and grant system. Better tracking will help to ensure contractual compliance, fiscal monitoring, and contract renewal.

Bureau staff responded to various departmental matters such as the Leased Vehicle Program and the ProCard, which is a credit card for use by state employees. The ProCard manual was rewritten and posted on the DNRC website. It is anticipated that in excess of 90 percent of the department's purchases will be conducted utilizing the Procard, saving paperwork and increasing management's ability to track and monitor purchases.

The bureau continues to revise the department's procurement and contracting manual to comply with recent legal mandates and to increase its effectiveness and ease of use for department employees. This manual is also posted on the DNRC website, and bureau staff have conducted a number of training sessions for department staff.

Bureau staff continue to monitor and report to management on a variety of possibilities for saving costs in such matters as cell phone usage and fire-related procurements.

Personnel Bureau

The Personnel Bureau has been involved in reaching the following goals: (1) completion of performance appraisals for 100 percent of DNRC employees, (2) completion of updated sexual harassment training by 100 percent of DNRC employees, (3) acquisition of current salary market data for all DNRC positions, and (4) completion of the Model Rules of Conduct on-line training course by 100 percent of DNRC employees. Current projects are (1) piloting a new performance appraisal document, (2) updating the Pay Plan 20 rules, (3) piloting a new approach to training DNRC employees with in-house subject matter experts, and (4) continuing our web-based training approach.

Information Technology Bureau

In Fiscal Year 2004, the Information Technology Bureau continued to meet the department's needs in public information, editing, graphic design, computer support, and software development. In-house software development and editing and graphics services continue to save the agency money and provide high-quality products. New, innovative, and cost-effective ways to use computers to perform state business are continually being found. Highlights of the bureau's accomplishments over the past year are listed below.

- The public information officer (PIO) completed several hurdles this year. First, the DNRC Public Information Policy was updated to guide the agency's interaction with the media into the 21st century. Second, PIO expanded into providing much needed marketing and public information assistance to several groups and organizations peripheral to DNRC; these groups include the Montana Urban and Community Forestry Council, the Montana Forest Stewardship Council, and the Montana Fire Alliance. Last, the DNRC PIO became heavily involved in public information dissemination during the 2003 fire season, working directly with both incident management teams and the Northern Rockies Incident Information Center.
- The editing and graphics staff prepared DNRC's *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2003* and quarterly issues of the department's newsletter, *DNRCConversation*. Publications completed for the divisions included reports, brochures, and newsletters. Graphics projects included posters, maps, banners, certificates, archeological drawings, and legal exhibits.
- Network connections in eight offices were updated, which enabled high-speed access to all state systems, including the recently developed Trust Land Management System and the Water Rights System.

- The analysis phase of the Contracts, Loans, or Grants System was completed, and the system was partially written, with a completion date set for December 2004. This system is being developed in-house and is a replacement for the existing loan and grant system.

Fiscal Bureau

During Fiscal Year 2004, the Fiscal Bureau processed more than 19,000 payments. More than 35,000 checks were received, deposited, and distributed within trust, federal, and state special revenue accounts, with total receipts of over \$200 million.

One General Obligation Bond was sold to provide funds for the wastewater program.

State of Montana legislative auditors were on-site for several weeks to audit the agency's financial activity in Fiscal Years 2003 and 2004. An additional financial audit was conducted on the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program, and a performance audit was conducted on the Fire Program. Fiscal staff assisted by providing documentation and answering questions.

The financial accounting software of the Statewide Accounting, Budgeting, and Human Resources System was successfully upgraded to a web-based environment in March 2004.

